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On Moral Taste.

BY moral taste is here meant a disposition of mind, or preparation of heart, to relish, or be disgusted with moral subjects. An attempt will be made to show that there is something in the human mind, of a moral nature, which bears a resemblance to the appetites of the body, by which men have a preparation to be pleased or displeased with certain kinds of food, fruits or liquors.

Moral subjects admit only of moral evidence, and not of mathematical demonstration; and when they are of an abstruse nature, fixed attention and careful illustration are necessary, that their evidence may be clearly manifested and suitably impressed. The subject to be now considered, being of this nature, it is proposed to give a short dissertation on the taste or appetites of the body, which may illustrate and assist in inquiring into the moral taste.

1. The universal experience and observation of mankind render it manifest, that people are pleased by tasting certain kinds of food and fruits, and are disgusted with

other kinds. Different men are pleased and disgusted with different things; so that what is agreeable to one is loathsome to another, and what one regards with indifference, is exquisitely relished by his neighbor. This also takes place among animals of every species; so that they choose different kinds of food. Something similar operates as really in smelling and hearing, as in tasting. And from a like cause, people are led to prefer different employments, company and amusements. And this is so powerful, that those things which highly entertain some, do as strongly disgust others.

2. Experience and observation equally prove that the affections of being pleased or disgusted by certain things, are in a degree permanent, and continue the same for years together, and frequently through life, when those things are applied to the taste; and that they never can be contemplated without some degree of desire or abhorrence, accordingly as the taste is a preparation to be pleased or offended by them. There is however many times a gradual, and sometimes, by some special

cause, a sudden change, by which some things which once pleased disgust, and which once disgusted please; and when the change has taken place, it continues as permanent as other appetites.—From these considerations it seems to be evident, that there is a certain preparation in the organs of taste, smell, &c., to be pleased or displeased with certain objects of sense; because, wherever these objects are presented, they uniformly produce those effects, unless some powerful cause prevents them. And this preparation of palate is by common consent called the taste or appetite. And men say, ‘They always have an appetite for these things.’—The word taste is also used in a still more extensive sense, and we speak of a taste, not only for food, but for music, company, polite accomplishments, history and many other things; meaning a preparation to be pleased with them, and such a preparation as remains through life, or for a long time, and is proved by the uniform effects which they produce on every occasion, when those things occur.

3. This preparation to be so pleased or displeased, tho’ it remains in the palate continually, is never in exercise, unless the particular food or fruits, which excite pleasure or displeasure, are tasted, seen, or at least tho’t of. The appetite, or preparation of the organs of taste lies dormant, and gives one no desire, pleasure, pain or other affection, until called into action by the object by which it is prepared to be affected.

4. When the object of the appetite is presented, then it acts, if nothing interferes, in proportion to its strength and the nearness of the object. If we but barely think of the object, the appetite

may be but little affected. If in addition to this we expect to enjoy it soon, the appetite is still more affected. If it be bro’t in sight, prepared to be eaten, if it be smelt and contemplated with undivided attention, there is a great affection of the organs of taste, and the desire is powerful. But it is only when actually received that the sensation is most exquisite. The appetite therefore is distinct from actually tasting the object, and from the pleasure or disgust it produces. It is the preparation, and these are the affections of the appetite.

5. There may be an appetite for two kinds of fruit, and the appetite for one of them may be much stronger than for the other. If both should be presented at the same time, and but one could be obtained, a decided preference might be given to one, because the organs of taste are adapted to be more exquisitely affected by one than by the other. Let one be a pomegranate and the other an orange, and I am unable to purchase but one. I should without hesitation purchase the pomegranate, for the sake of its taste, if both were presented at the same time. But I have a desire for the orange also, and if I had the means, I would gladly procure both, and should eat both with pleasure.

In certain circumstances however, my appetite would lead me to purchase the orange, in preference to the pomegranate. Let the orange be now present, and the pomegranate cannot be obtained within an hour: It is out of sight, tho’ soon expected; but the orange is before me, I see it, I smell it, I contemplate it, my appetite is powerfully excited. But the pomegranate being at a

distance, and unseen, has much less effect on the appetite, and hence, after some debate with my judgment, which would direct me to wait an hour for the pomegranate, that would afford more pleasure in the issue, I purchase however, from present appetite, the orange. This is according to the known properties of the appetites.

Mankind are agreed in acknowledging the existence of such appetites; and it is reasonable from the uniform effects of their objects, to consider them permanent, tho' often dormant; the effects cannot in any other way be rationally accounted for.

Therefore, if there be something in the moral affections of the mind, similar to those of the body in all these particulars, it is conceived, that it would be unreasonable to deny the existence of a moral appetite, taste, disposition or preparation to be pleased or displeased with moral subjects, according to the nature of the taste. Let this resemblance or analogy be considered.

1. Universal experience and observation make it manifest, that certain men appear to be pleased with the doctrines of the gospel, with the law of God, and with his supremacy in the exercise of universal providence; and that others are displeased with these things. This is also agreeable to the holy scriptures, which teach us, that men either love God or are at enmity against him.

2. Observation and experience prove, that these affections of being pleased or displeased with God, and his government, are in a degree permanent, and continue, so as to form the general characters of men; and that they usually take place, whenever these moral

subjects are strongly impressed upon and realized by the mind. With reference to this, the holy scriptures denominate some men the friends, and some the enemies of God. His friends have also a fixed abhorrence of sin, and his enemies delight in it. This is fully illustrated in the different characters of men, given for our instruction, in the word of God.

Among his friends, some are more usually, or more strongly affected with one and some with another part of his dispensations, as his law, his gospel or his providence; and have a correspondent set of exercises and duties, by which some become more especially exemplary in one part of Christian duties and exercises, and some in another. In the same manner, some who love sin, are given to detraction, others to covetousness, intemperance, profaneness, or persecution of the people of God; and these propensities become characteristic of them. These are as evidential of a permanent taste or preparation of mind to be affected with pleasure or pain by moral objects, as the analogous affections are of the natural taste or appetites of the body. It is rational to consider them as the necessary effects of moral taste; and they can be rationally accounted for in this way, and in no other. It is also true, that sometimes these moral affections are suddenly changed, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus, and of the three thousand at the memorable day of pentecost; and then contrary affections become permanent, which proves what the scriptures call a change of heart; and is the same that is meant by a change of moral taste or disposition of the mind towards such things, and is as evident as the

change of bodily appetites. This moral taste is different from moral affections, and is the cause of them, or the preparation for them; and stands in nearly the same relation to the affections, as the will does to its volitions, except that the taste governs both the affections, and the will, with its volitions.

3. This preparation to be pleased or offended with moral things, which we call the taste or the heart, or the disposition of mind, (for these are synonymous words,) tho' by continual and repeated observations, it is found to remain constantly in the mind, is never in exercise, unless those moral objects with which it is prepared to be delighted or disgusted, are presented to its view. The taste or heart lies dormant, as to these things, and produces no exercises of the affections, is neither pleased or offended, until called into action by the contemplation of the object with which it is prepared to be affected, that is, by moral things. Thus the wise virgins often slumber and sleep.

4. When the divine character, or the object of the taste is presented, then it acts in proportion to its strength, the nearness of the object, and its being contemplated and realized with undivided attention. If the true character of God be bro't into view, and be seriously considered, and the relations in which we stand to him and his government, appear real and interesting, there will be a great affection of love or enmity, according to the nature of the heart or taste. And hence it is that the people of God are exceedingly blessed in beholding him, and his enemies become exasperated to madness, when God and his government are brought clearly into view. This was the case under

the ministry of Christ and his apostles, whom they persecuted with extreme violence.

5. There may be, and there is in believers while in this world, two tastes, respecting moral subjects, in direct opposition to each other; one is pleased with holiness, and the other with the objects of sinful pleasure. In the holy scriptures these are distinguished by the law of the mind, and the law in the members, or the new heart, and the carnal heart. "I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me: for I delight in the law of God, after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. So then, with my mind, I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin."—In all true believers the holy taste is stronger than the sinful one, or the supreme object in which it delights is so infinitely superior to all the objects which please the carnal taste, that if both were felt and realized by the mind, at the same time, and in the same degree, a decided preference would always be given in favor of holiness; for the mind is prepared to be more exquisitely delighted with God than with any sinful gratifications. "Thou art my portion, O Lord."

But in certain circumstances, believers do actually serve sin, and the sinful taste prevails. At such times, some object, calculated to inflame the sinful taste, is present—is contemplated—the imagination fired and the taste strongly excited, and God is either not thought of at all, or his glory is little contemplated; and in this way the sinful taste hurries the

man into evil exercises. Thus David had his perverse inclination or taste enflamed, while God was out of view ; so that he did very great wickedness. But when he reflected upon his sin in the presence of God, he was filled with anguish of spirit ; and said, ' My bones waxed old thro' my roaring all the day long'—' Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.'

In all these particulars, the affections of the mind are analogous to those of the palate ; and it is thought, do as fully prove a moral taste, which is the foundation of moral affections or exercises, as the others prove an appetite, which is the foundation of the pleasure or disgust, which certain kinds of food or fruits give to men and other animals.

Besides : It is thought, that this idea of a moral taste, distinct from moral exercises, and the foundation of them, is supported by the holy scriptures. Our Lord says, " Either make the tree good, and his fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt, for the tree is known by his fruit." And again he says, " Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles ? A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." The tree is here designed to represent the moral quality of the man, or his preparation for good or evil exercises, and the fruit, to represent those exercises, as appears by their connection. In one instance, the tree is mentioned as a mark to distinguish false prophets, and in the other, it is explained by the following words. " A good man, out of the good

treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things ; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things." These words teach us, that there is the same preparation in the heart to produce particular moral exercises, good or evil, as in a tree to produce good or evil fruit ; that the heart or taste is as distinct from its affections or exercises, as the tree from its fruit ; and that the exercises of the heart do as certainly and as necessarily correspond with its nature, as the fruits do with the nature of the tree.

The scriptures frequently use the word *heart* in the same sense, signifying the moral taste. They mention a stony heart, an heart of flesh, a new heart, an honest and good heart, a clean heart, an hard heart and a carnal heart, in such a way as seem necessarily to imply a preparation or taste for holy or unholy exercises. They also expressly distinguish between the heart and its exercises. They mention, the desires of the heart, an heart which worketh iniquity, and an heart that believeth. It is thought that this proves, that by the heart, when used in this manner, we are to understand a moral taste or disposition.

Again : That men have a moral taste, and by nature a corrupt moral taste, appears to be more fully confirmed by the consideration, that mankind universally begin their lives with evil exercises ; and unless renewed by the Holy Ghost, they are wholly given to sin, at all times, and on all occasions, which is a scripture doctrine. When the chain of their moral exercises is disturbed by the most surprising incidents, or suspended and broken off by sleep, or diverted from one object to another, in an infinite variety of ways,

still "Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart is only evil continually." This is naturally accounted for, on the idea that they have an evil heart or taste, which is a continual preparation to love sin and hate holiness, and that they have no other moral inclination; and that this remains independent of moral exercises, and the foundation, faculty or principle of them; for in this case, the tree must always bring forth such fruit, or the heart such exercises. But if no such corrupt taste or bias be supposed, recourse must be had to some hypothesis more unnatural, and different from the ordinary method of divine operations, by which God brings about events by natural or moral causes, sometimes called the laws of nature. And this hypothesis must also contradict the scripture representations, of corrupt streams, depending on a corrupt fountain, for their evil quality. It is believed, that this is no small evidence of a moral taste, and of one which is corrupt.

Further: It is believed, that the scripture representation of regeneration brings a serious argument, in proof of the existence of a moral taste. Regeneration is a change from sin to holiness. In effecting this, God takes away the heart of stone, and gives an heart of flesh. It is an event never repeated in the same person. In giving the new heart, God is represented as doing something for a man, which he never does again, and which is different from the ordinary operations of his spirit, in carrying on the work of sanctification. And this corresponds with the idea, that regeneration is the communication of an holy taste, which begins to exterminate the original corrupt taste. And

all that the scriptures say of regeneration is intelligible in this view; for that taste is permanent, and whenever it is excited by contemplating God and the things which it relishes, will put forth holy affections.—But were we to disbelieve any such thing as an holy taste, and suppose the heart to be nothing but a simple chain of moral exercises, we must necessarily suppose, that there is nothing special in regeneration, different in kind, from that which takes place at any other time, when God is pleased to create an holy exercise in the soul, after it had been employed in sinful exercises; which seems to be contrary to the representation, which the scriptures give us, of the importance, and especially of the peculiar nature of regeneration.

The idea of moral taste, as it has been explained, is also in perfect conformity to that which the scriptures assert concerning two opposite laws, or propensities in the Christian. The old one is but in part taken away in this life, and a new one is created.—This will therefore reasonably account for the inconstancy of believers. When objects adapted to please either taste are brought near and contemplated, that taste prevails for the time. And the whole is perfectly intelligible, which otherwise would be a mystery. For Christians are conscious of one, and sometimes of an opposite class of moral exercises, as according to the idea of a moral taste, they must be, when the objects which please either taste are out of view.

Moreover: The view we have taken of the subject is calculated to impress on the mind the importance of the numerous directions, which God has given us, to avoid temptations, and to pray

that we benotled into them; which would not appear so evidently important, if we rejected the idea of a moral taste or disposition of mind. It peculiarly shows us the importance of avoiding the company and evil communications of the wicked, of meditating on the law of God, and of keeping the heart with all diligence. For according to the idea that Christians have two opposite moral tastes or inclinations, which are excited and put in action by the objects which are suited to give them delight respectively, it is evidently of great consequence to make a covenant with our eyes and with all our senses, not to present us with the objects suited to inflame the sinful taste; and that we do not suffer them to work upon our imaginations, lest they hurry us into sin. And it is equally necessary, that we keep those things in view continually, which please the holy taste; that we may have holy affections, and be in the fear of the Lord all the day long. Thus we may set the Lord always before us, and ponder the path of life.

Besides: As the appetites of the body are weakened by long absence of their objects, and men become gradually weaned from them, and as they are strengthened by frequent gratifications; so avoiding temptations and sinful indulgencies tends to weaken and subdue the corrupt taste, and wean us from sin; and the constant sense of the perfections of God, and the exercise of gracious affections naturally tend to strengthen an holy disposition or taste. These considerations should engage us to follow the directions we have received, to avoid temptation, and set the Lord always before us. The way to conquer is to fly. And it is in obedience

and the use of means directed, that we are to expect that God will work in us, both to will and to do, by his special grace. In this way we are to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure.

Further: The view now taken of this subject peculiarly helps us to understand, how it is, that the truths revealed in the scriptures are the food of the saints. They grow by the sincere milk of the word, and are edified by the use of all Christian institutions. These things excite holy affections in those who have an upright heart or moral taste, strengthen it, call off the heart from objects of sinful desire, show how evil and unsatisfying they are, and wean the heart from them. We have occasion to admire the mercy of God in the gift of his word and institutions, which so often call our minds off from the objects which inflame the sinful taste, to meditate on those which captivate an holy inclination. Thus we have the sabbath weekly, and daily calls to family and closet prayer; and are taught to address God whenever we sit down to our food, often to read the scriptures, attend the religious instruction of children, and associate with the people of God. These things feed the people of God, recover them from temptations, habituate them to holy exercises, and so weaken the power of the corrupt, and strengthen the good disposition. And accordingly, where these helps are not enjoyed, or are too much neglected, Christians are sensible of spiritual decay. This also may be considered as another evidence of the reality of a moral taste.

Again: If there be an holy taste, then believers will hunger and thirst after righteousness;

and if an evil one, then the wicked will have their minds on those gratifications which suit their taste, and will be tempted and drawn away by their own lusts, just as we find by scripture, experience and observation that they are ; which, while it brings another evidence of a moral taste, at the same time, calls us to examine ourselves, and instructs us by what means we may know our own hearts, even by their fruits.

Finally : Men must be born again. We need good hearts, and a good heart or moral preparation is indeed an excellent treasure ; agreeable to the instruction of our Lord, " A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things."

CARDIA.

A Narrative on the subject of Missions : and a Statement of the Funds of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, for the year 1803. Published by order of the Trustees of the Society.

AMONG all the great events which have taken place within a few years past, no one is more remarkable, than the sudden and extensive ardor which has been excited, among Christians, in almost all parts of Christendom, to spread the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, and advance his kingdom in the world. In Europe, Christians, of every denomination, have united their efforts, to send the gospel to nations which are in total darkness, and to extend the means of salvation with respect to those who but partially enjoy them. Many missionary societies have been formed. The hearts of Christians have been opened, to contribute liberally of

their earthly goods, for raising necessary funds ; and many instruments have been raised up, and endowed with extraordinary zeal and fortitude, who have been sent and are now laboring as missionaries in the most distant and uncivilized parts of the world.

The same spirit has operated, in a most extraordinary manner, on the hearts of Christians in America. Within a few years past, there have been formed ten or twelve missionary societies, for the purpose of furnishing the inhabitants in the new settlements with the preaching of the gospel, and the administration of Christian ordinances ; and of gospelizing the tribes of Indians who inhabit our western frontiers.

So extensive a co-operation among Christians, to spread the knowledge of Christ and to advance his kingdom in the world, affords great reason to believe, that it is God's design to make some uncommon advances, at least, towards the fulfilment of his promise, to fill the earth " *with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.*"

A missionary society was formed in Connecticut in June, A. D. 1798. And, although at first it was destitute of the necessary funds for carrying into execution the benevolent designs of its institution, yet it has pleased God to open the hearts of the people to contribute, publicly and privately, in so liberal a manner, that the funds of the society have been uniformly increasing ; notwithstanding a number of missionaries have been constantly employed.

The same zeal which has prompted the pious, by their prayers and contributions, to advance the missionary cause, will naturally enkindle in them a desire and solicitude to know in what

manner the monies they have contributed have been applied, as well as the success which has attended missionary labors.

The Trustees of the society, therefore, as they have annually done, now present to the public the following narrative of their proceedings and transactions during the past year.

There have been, in the course of the year 1803, thirteen missionaries employed in the service of the society; some during the whole year, others for a shorter period. The following is a summary account of their labors and success, as far as can be collected from the various letters and journals which have been received from them. From whence it will appear, that missionary labors have been extended over a vast tract of country—that the hearts of many pious people have been made glad—that some in security have been awakened—and that there still remains abundant encouragement for the friends of the missionary institution, not only to continue their exertions, but to redouble their zeal.

At the close of the Narrative of 1802, it is said, "The Rev. *John Willard* is now laboring in the settlements adjacent to Connecticut river, &c. But no particular accounts have been received from him." The Board of Trustees have since received a particular journal of his missionary labors; from which it appears, that he entered on his mission the beginning of October 1802, and confined his labors to the towns on each side of Connecticut river, in the northern parts of New-Hampshire and Vermont. He continued to itinerate from one settlement to another, for sixteen weeks, excepting three Sabbaths

which he spent at Lunenburg. He was employed in preaching, visiting families and catechising children as opportunity presented. During the time he was in missionary service, he travelled 650 miles—preached forty six times—formed one church—administered baptism to five persons, catechised children, and visited more than a hundred families.

Mr. *Willard* writes, "I can truly say, I never spent thirteen weeks in my life more agreeably than when I was upon missionary services, tho' the business was fatiguing; wherever I went I was cordially received. In fundry instances, it seemed as tho' my labors were attended with success." He further informs, that in general the people were ready to hear the word; and manifested a high degree of gratitude, for the benevolent exertions which have been made to furnish them and other infant settlements with the preaching of the gospel. The account Mr. *Willard* gives is confirmed by several letters from some of the inhabitants in the places where he labored, which express a high degree of gratitude for the attention which has been paid them, and earnest solicitations that they may still share in the benevolent exertions of the Missionary Society of Connecticut.

In the last Narrative it is mentioned that the Rev. *Jedidiah Bushnell* was reappointed a missionary, with directions to visit the towns and settlements in the states of New-York and Vermont where he had formerly labored. The following extract from his Journal contains a general account of his mission:

"I commenced my mission the 18th of May 1802, and was gone 40 weeks. Twenty one

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‘ weeks I spent as a missionary ;
 ‘ and 19 I preached as a candidate
 ‘ without expense to the society.
 ‘ During my mission I preached
 ‘ 120 sermons ; attended 20 public
 ‘ conferences ; administered the
 ‘ sacrament of the Lord’s supper 5
 ‘ times ; and baptized 43 children
 ‘ and 4 adults. These missionary
 ‘ labors were performed, the most
 ‘ of them, in infant settlements and
 ‘ churches which I had formerly
 ‘ visited, with a few exceptions ;
 ‘ and in places where I thought
 ‘ the necessities of the people and
 ‘ the cause of religion required.”

“ Through my whole mission I
 ‘ have been treated kindly by the
 ‘ people ; and have found the
 ‘ young churches generally to bear
 ‘ fruit to the glory of Christ. Some
 ‘ of them appear with hardly that
 ‘ life that they once did, but
 ‘ some give evidence that their last
 ‘ works are more than the first.
 ‘ If the showers in the wilderness
 ‘ are not so heavy as they have
 ‘ been, the cloud is more generally
 ‘ spread, and there is a divine
 ‘ dropping of heavenly rain, almost
 ‘ throughout the wilderness ; so
 ‘ that Sion begins to raise her head
 ‘ in many places, above her ene-
 ‘ mies, and looks like an army
 ‘ with banners ; she is not only in-
 ‘ vigorated, but consolidated and
 ‘ extended.”

After he had completed his mis-
 sion, Mr. *Bushnell* was reappointed
 a missionary to labor in the north-
 western part of Vermont, such a
 portion of the time as he could be
 spared from the people of Corn-
 wall in that state, where he has
 been recently installed. In a let-
 ter dated December 5th, he ob-
 serves ;

“ Respecting my present mis-
 sion, I have spent 13 weeks in
 ‘ the service of the society ; princi-
 ‘ pally in the three northern coun-

‘ ties upon the west side of the
 ‘ mountain, and among the moun-
 ‘ tains. I have been twice nearly
 ‘ to the northern line of the state,
 ‘ and once eastward of the moun-
 ‘ tain.”

Towards the close of the Nar-
 rative for 1802 it is said, The Rev.
Samuel Leonard is itinerating in the
 northwestern parts of Vermont.
 But no account had then been re-
 ceived of his missionary services.
 The Trustees have since had par-
 ticular information, by several let-
 ters from him. By a letter dated
 Poultney, February 28, 1803,
 it appears that he commenced his
 missionary labors December 7,
 1802. From Poultney he pro-
 ceeded on a tour through a large
 number of towns, which contin-
 ued for five weeks. He then re-
 turned to Poultney. In this tour
 he preached 30 sermons—atten-
 ded 11 conferences, and admin-
 istered baptism to one child, be-
 sides making many family visits.

On Tuesday, March 11, 1803,
 Mr. *Leonard* began another mis-
 sionary tour of 11 weeks ; in
 which he visited many of the
 new settled towns ; and preach-
 ed, visited the sick and from house
 to house—attended many confer-
 ences, and administered the ordi-
 nances of baptism and the Lord’s
 supper.

He writes, “ In the whole 11
 ‘ weeks I have preached 60 ser-
 ‘ mons—attended 24 conferences
 ‘ —baptized 19 persons—received
 ‘ nine into the church, and admin-
 ‘ istered the communion four times.
 ‘ My last tour has been chiefly in
 ‘ the new townships where mission-
 ‘ aries have scarcely been. Peo-
 ‘ ple have been attentive to meet-
 ‘ ings, and treated me with hos-
 ‘ pitality. Many have expressed
 ‘ a high sense of gratitude, to the
 ‘ Missionary Society and people

‘ of Connecticut, for the exertions
‘ they have made for their future
‘ well being. I think I have
‘ found, in every town, occasion
‘ to thank God and take cour-
‘ age.”

Mr. *Leonard* has since been another short missionary tour among the settlements in the north-western parts of Vermont, in many of which there has been for some time past a revival of religion; and numbers have been added to the Lord.—

New Connecticut opens a wide and extensive field for missionary labors. It contains upwards of fifty new settled towns, and by persons and families from different parts of the country, but chiefly from Connecticut. The Trustees of the Missionary Society, as appears from preceding narratives, early turned their attention to the state of those infant settlements. At the commencement of the year 1803, there were two missionaries in New Connecticut. The Rev. Messrs. *Joseph Badger* and *Ezekiel J. Chapman*.

Mr. *Badger* has continued in the service of the society through the whole of the past year. From several letters containing a journal of his labors and services, it appears, that he has travelled through a great part of the settlements—preaching, visiting families and sick persons—forming churches—catechising children—attending conferences, and conversing with individuals—That people in general were ready to hear preaching, although some were disposed to make opposition. He found some serious and attentive Christians in most of the settlements he visited, and many instances occurred of individuals who were under deep religious impressions. Mr. *Badger* repeatedly

mentions the great need of more missionary labors than can be performed by the missionaries already appointed for that extensive field.

Mr. *Badger* still continues to labor as a missionary in that country, and manifests great zeal and engagedness in the missionary cause. In many instances his labors have been attended with a divine blessing, and numbers through his instrumentality have been brought to a knowledge and love of the truth.

—By late accounts from New Connecticut it appears that there is a very general revival there; that it has extended to most of the settlements, and its effects are similar to those of the revival in Kentucky and other southern states. The harvest there is truly great and the laborers are few. It is hoped therefore that the pious people of this state will pray earnestly to God to raise up and qualify suitable laborers for that extensive field; and that they will cheerfully contribute of their earthly substance to enable the Trustees to support a competent number of missionaries there and in other places where they are wanted.

The Rev. *Ezekiel J. Chapman* left New Connecticut about the middle of April last. In the time he was on his mission, which was about a year and a half, he rode more than 2000 miles—“preached 180 times—administered the ordinances of baptism—and the Lord’s supper—catechised and instructed children—visited families and conversed with parents and children, and performed other missionary labors.”

Mr. *Thomas Robbins* of Norfolk was appointed a missionary in May last, to supply the place of Mr. *Chapman* in New Connecticut. On the 20th of July following he

was ordained by the North Con-
fociation in Litchfield county, as
preparatory to his entering on his
mission. He set out from Nor-
folk for New Connecticut the 25th
of August. A letter has been
received from him, dated Carlisle
(Penn.), October 10, about 40
days from the time he left Nor-
folk, in which he writes, he "rode
470 miles—preached 39 times
—attended two conferences—
—administered the sacrament of
the Lord's supper once—visited
sick persons—catechised chil-
dren, and endeavored to give
much instruction."

These services were performed
in the settlements on the Susque-
hannah through which Mr. *Rob-
bins* was directed to travel as a mis-
sionary on his way to New Con-
necticut; and it appears from his
letter that these settlements are in
great need of the labors of faith-
ful, zealous missionaries to preserve
them from the baneful influence of
errorists who are industriously prop-
agating the most pernicious opin-
ions. By another letter from Mr.
Robbins, recently received, it ap-
pears that he reached New Con-
necticut the latter end of Novem-
ber, having been detained several
weeks by sickness in the western
part of Pennsylvania. He men-
tions that there is a very general
revival of religion in the back
counties of that state, and many
instances of falling similar to those
in Kentucky. Having been an
eye witness to these and attentively
observed them, he is convinced
they proceed from the power of
God and are not to be accounted
for upon any natural principles.
Mr. *Robbins* will labor in concert
with Mr. *Badger* and with a third
missionary who is soon to be sent
there; the Trustees having deter-
mined to keep three there for the
current year.

The Rev. Messrs. *Seth Williston*
and *James W. Woodward* were
appointed missionaries to occupy
and labor in the same field which
they improved the last year; viz.
the western counties of New-
York, and northern counties of
Pennsylvania.

From the letters and journal of
Mr. *Williston*, it appears that he
made three missionary tours, from
Nov. 10, 1802, to May 14, 1803.
The first consisted of eleven weeks,
which were spent in the counties
of Luzerne and Wayne in Penn-
sylvania, and terminated the latter
part of January 1803. In which
Mr. *Williston* preached often—vis-
ited families and attended confer-
ences. In some places he found
a special attention to the great
concerns of futurity, and in general
a disposition to hear the word.
He gives the following account
of the state of religion in the
counties of Wayne and Luzerne.
"The counties of Wayne and
Luzerne, as far as they came into
my view, call for our compassion,
our prayers and our exertions.
The number of apparent Chris-
tians is, comparatively, few. Still
I found the people more hospita-
ble and kind, and more attentive
to meetings than I expected.—
There is not a single minister of
the Congregational or Presbyte-
rian order, in these counties. The
prospect, as it respects the firm
establishment of gospel order, is
exceedingly gloomy.—I hope,
notwithstanding all these gloomy
and forbidding appearances, that
God has good in store for these
people. The attention which he
has lately disposed the different
missionary societies to pay to
them, gives me great encourage-
ment. I remember, that when
Christ was on earth, he sent forth
his disciples, two and two, *whith-
er he himself would come.*"

On the 22d of February 1803, Mr. *Williston* entered on his second tour, to consist of five weeks; to be spent principally in the county of Steuben. In this tour he preached between 30 and 40 sermons—attended several conferences, besides conversing with families and individuals. He found some special attention to religion in some places. On the whole he writes, “This was a new field of labor to me. This county is but thinly inhabited. Its situation, in a religious point of light, is truly affecting. There is no Presbyterian or Congregational church in it.”

Mr. *Williston* began a third tour, to consist of three weeks, April 20, thro’ a part of the counties of Tioga, Cayuga and Onondaga; and returned the 10th of May following.

He preached about 20 sermons, besides attending many conferences and visiting families. He also attended a convention of ministers and delegates from churches, which met for the purpose of forming a plan for an Association, in the military tract. He examined some as to their qualifications for admission into the communion of the church, and admitted some who had been previously examined. He administered the Lord’s supper, and baptized several persons.

At the close of his narrative of this mission he observes, “The field of this last mission is one of the most fruitful parts of the new settlements. There is no special awakening among the people at present, except one now on the decline. The Christians with whom I had a more particular opportunity, generally complain of not feeling that interest in religion which they hope they have

felt in days past. They are sighing for the more stated ordinances of the Lord’s house. In some places, they are taking some measures to enjoy them. The truly pious still make but a small part of the infant settlements.—These desire, and some of them pant after the house of the Lord, and the stated administration of the word and ordinances.”

In June last Mr. *Williston* made a visit to Connecticut, and soon returned to Lisle where he was installed, as the stated pastor of the church in that place, with permission to labor as a missionary a part of the time as he had done before. In the course of the fall he performed two short missionary tours, amounting to seven weeks, among the settlements on the head waters of the Susquehannah. During these missions he preached about 50 times; administered the sacrament of the Lord’s supper 4 times; baptized 6 children; assisted in the formation of one church; admitted several persons to communion; attended conferences, and visited families.

Mr. *Woodward*, who was appointed to act in concert with Mr. *Williston*, began a tour from Lisle into the northern parts of Pennsylvania, the latter part of October 1802, and continued it till January 24th, 1803; and then returned to Lisle. He employed the time in preaching on Sabbaths and week days—visiting families and attending on conferences.

On the 28th of January he proceeded to the military tract, in the western part of New-York, where he performed missionary services till the beginning of March following. He then revisited the northern counties in Pennsylvania and continued his missionary labors among them, till about the middle

of May, when he returned again to Lisle.

Mr. *Woodward*'s report of the religious state of those settlements through which he passed, perfectly agrees with that of Mr. *Williston* already related. In the several towns which Mr. *Woodward* visited, he preached about 180 sermons—administered the Lord's supper 8 times—baptized one adult and 38 children : Among which are included 6 households, containing 25 children. He writes, " People in general have been friendly to the design on which I was sent."

The 19th of May above mentioned, Mr. *Woodward* again left Lisle, and proceeded on the way to revisit the northern counties in Pennsylvania ; and again returned to Lisle the 24th of August following. In this tour Mr. *Woodward* travelled over a large number of settlements ; not only attending on conferences, making family visits, &c. but he preached between 70 and 80 sermons—baptized 3 persons—assisted in examining several persons for communion ; and in the formation of one church, consisting of 27 members.

Mr. *Woodward* in a letter observes ; " In places which I visited last spring, I think there is an increased attention to the word. It is a country which greatly needs reforming. The state of the country claims the pity and the prayers of saints."

Mr. *Woodward* continued to itinerate as a missionary till towards the close of the year, when he returned to Hartford. The following extract from his journal contains a summary view of his whole mission.

" Since October 7th, 1802, I have preached 321 times : bap-

tized 51 children and 3 adults ; administered the Lord's supper 10 times ; assisted in forming 3 churches ; attended conferences ; visited schools and private families. I have visited most of the settlements in Luzerne and Wayne counties, excepting those on the Delaware river, and some of them three or four times. Missionaries are cordially received by many in this country, and happy fruits attending their labors are apparent. I travelled into Northumberland county and visited a few settlements there between the north and western branches of the Susquehanna river. In the state of New-York, my labors were chiefly confined to the counties of Tioga and Chenango. I have been kindly treated in most places which I have visited, and my labors have been gratefully received."

Mr. *Woodward* is re-appointed a Missionary for this year and it is expected will soon revisit the field of his former labors.

Mr. *Samuel P. Robbins* was appointed a missionary, to labor among the inhabitants on Black River and parts adjoining. A letter was received from him, dated Rutland (No. 3) and Lowville, (No. 11) October 10th and 15th, 1803, when his missionary appointment was about half expired.—He began his missionary labors at Camden. From thence he went westward about 20 miles " preaching in different neighborhoods, 3, 4 and 5 miles apart." Thence he proceeded to Steuben. He observes, " People treat me kindly wherever I go, a very few instances excepted." From Steuben he proceeded to the river, preaching in every settlement and making family visits.

He purposes finishing his mission, by revisiting the settlements of western Camden. Thence to proceed through Redfield (Salmon River county) to Ellisburgh, Perch River, Catfish Creek, &c. Then return to Knoxville, and pass through the river towns homeward. Mr. *Robbins* in his letter observes, "The state of religion, in general, in this country is rather low. Oh, how much the people here need the ministrations of the gospel!"

At a late meeting of the Trustees it was voted that Mr. *Robbins* should be requested to continue in that country till the first of May next.

Mr. *Thomas Williams* was appointed a Missionary for 4 months. The field of labor assigned him, was the counties of Delaware and Otsego in the state of New-York. He began his missionary labors about the beginning of September last. By a letter, dated at Meredith (Delaware county) Sept. 30, it appears he began his labors in the county of Delaware, excepting one sabbath which he spent at Worcester, in the county of Otsego. He had then spent 4 weeks in the county of Delaware; and had visited every settlement in the county, excepting two. He had preached 28 sermons—visited some sick persons, and families in which there were persons under serious impressions. In his letter he observes, "The hearers have generally been attentive. In some instances, scarcely a motion during sermon. In almost every place, there have been some tears. Christians, in many instances, appear to have been revived and strengthened. Such has been the appearance, in most places, that I have wished to stay longer, than I supposed I could

have time, and visit all the places I ought—I have been kindly received, &c."

Mr. *Williams* returned from his mission about the first of January and gave the following summary account of his labors: "I preached 111 times; visited several schools; visited a few persons who were sick; and attended several church meetings. I have heard many expressions of gratitude to God and to the Missionary Society for the labors of missionaries; and have seen abundant evidence of the good effects of those who have been employed before me, in the counties to which I was sent; and I see very great need of the continuance of missionary services among the people in that region."

The Trustees, at their meeting the beginning of January, re-appointed Mr. *Williams* a missionary to the same counties for one year; and deeming it expedient that he should be ordained previously to his entering on his mission, voted to request the Association of Windham county, of which he is a licentiate, to ordain him as an Evangelist.

About the middle of December, the Rev. *Ira Hart* finished a missionary tour of twelve weeks in the Black River country. The following is an abstract of his journal: "During my mission, I preached 55 sermons; attended several conferences; visited and prayed with the sick and attended funerals. I formed two churches, one in Leyden, consisting of 15 members, and one in Lowville, consisting of 16, to which there is a prospect that several additions will soon be made. I also met with several churches which had been previously formed, and attempted to heal divi-

‘ fions and compose difficulties
 ‘ which had sprung up, for want of
 ‘ a regular administration of Chris-
 ‘ tian ordinances and discipline.
 ‘ During my mission, I adminis-
 ‘ tered the sacrament of the Lord’s
 ‘ supper 6 times, and baptized 4
 ‘ adults and 14 children. I found
 ‘ in almost every place some indi-
 ‘ viduals under serious impressions,
 ‘ and in Turin a very considerable
 ‘ revival of religion. I was receiv-
 ‘ ed in almost every instance with
 ‘ great kindness, and treated with
 ‘ polite attention ; and though
 ‘ there may be some who would
 ‘ rejoice to hear no more of mis-
 ‘ sionaries, and to be left to walk
 ‘ in the light of their own eyes,
 ‘ this cannot be said of the people
 ‘ in general. The settlements on
 ‘ Black River are increasing with
 ‘ an unexampled rapidity, and
 ‘ loudly call for missionary labors
 ‘ among them, till they shall be
 ‘ able to settle ministers.”

The Rev. *Calvin Ingals* is now on a mission to the northeastern parts of Vermont. No intelligence has been received from him.

The Trustees have voted that another missionary be sent for the year to the northwestern parts of Vermont ; and one for six months to the settlements on Black River, and on the Oswegotchee ; and also one for four months to the settlements in the vicinity of the south end of lake George.

(To be continued.)

Dialogues on the Christian Doctrines,
 continued from page 290.

DIALOGUE III.

James.

WE will now, if you please, enter on the subject which we began, at our last interview. You believe the special agency of the spirit necessary for the salva-

tion of any one. If God always works in men, to will and to do of his own good pleasure, what does he ever do more, which you distinguish by a special or an irresistible operation ?

John. It will be necessary for me first, to explain what I mean by the common grace of the gospel, in order to give you my ideas of special grace. The law of God, arising from his perfections, is eternally binding on all intelligent beings, to love, serve and obey him, with all their powers, unceasingly ; for he is infinitely deserving and lovely in his nature, and one deviation from this law must necessarily bring sin, guilt and misery ; and it being impossible ever afterwards for beings to render to God more than *all* their love and obedience, so it will be impossible for them to atone for the least offence, and according to strict justice they must eternally deserve punishment. But God, from his own self-moving goodness, concerted a plan whereby he could be just and yet the justifier of every one that believeth in Jesus ; for he so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son a ransom, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life. In consequence of Christ’s atonement, salvation is offered to all mankind, that will throw down the weapons of their rebellion, and repent of their sins, and look alone to Jesus Christ for justification. The invitation is, whosoever will may come and partake of the waters of life freely—so that all who *will*, may now embrace the terms of salvation, as easy as they can partake of a rich feast, provided by a generous friend, who invites them in the most kind and tender manner to receive it, without mo-

ney and without price. This free provision of salvation, with the pressing invitations to receive it and every good that flows from it, is what I call common grace. I call it common, because it is offered to all who enjoy the light of the gospel.—God warns, calls and invites sinners to embrace the gospel, with his spirit, word, providence, judgments and mercies, expressed in various ways. God “commands men every where to repent;”—but mankind, possessing a spirit of supreme selfishness, wish to fulfil the lusts thereof, and with one accord they begin to excuse themselves, and refuse the kind invitations of the gospel feast; and one will go to his farm, and another to his merchandize, notwithstanding the feast was provided at the expense of the precious blood of the Son of God; and not one of all the race of Adam would ever participate of it, if God did not by the special agency of his divine spirit compel them to come in, by working in them both to will and to come, that Christ might see the travail of his soul and be satisfied. When God by his spirit works in his people to will, that is, to exercise true *faith* and repentance, it is what I call the special operation of the holy spirit.

James. Do you believe that none ever exercise true faith and repentance except those who will finally be saved?

John. I conceive this to be a doctrine fully taught in scripture. It is evident that Christ has a chosen people in distinction from the world. The scriptures say, “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.” Again: “and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the spirit of

truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not.” Again: “that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” Christ saith, “I pray not for the world, but for them thou hast given me, for they are thine.” It is farther evident that Christ’s chosen people receive a new heart, and are born again by the power of the Holy Ghost.—God saith, “And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall return unto me with their whole heart.” “And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to keep my statutes.” “But according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” “But as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” “For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

James. If it be a fact, that such an entire change of heart is wrought in those who are renewed by the spirit of God, why do we not see its fruits acted out in their lives and conversation? Why are they not holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; which was peculiarly characteristic of Christ? The impression of a seal gives a perfect image of its original.

John. The supreme bias or inclination of their heart, is after the image of Christ. “He that hath the spirit of Christ is none of his.” In this world they are sanctified only in part, they have the remains of sin in them;

they have a law in their members, warring against the law of their mind, so that they, with their mind, serve the law of God, but with their flesh, the law of sin. They delight in the law of God after the inward man; sin becomes their greatest enemy, and when they see it in themselves, they loath themselves and repent in dust and ashes, and cry with the apostle, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"—Christians are not free from sin and temptations. They sometimes fall into great crimes, but it appears to be a uniform rule of God's dispensations to bring them to true humility and unfeigned repentance, and to lead them to confess, with the deepest contrition of spirit; as we see in David, Peter and many other ancient saints. But every one that is created anew in Christ Jesus, is created unto good works, and let any one make ever so high profession of religion, if he does not bring forth fruits meet for repentance we have no evidence that he is born of God. "By their fruits ye shall know them." This great change consists in having the supreme affections of men's hearts taken from *self*, and placed on God, so that they love God's holy character independent of any expected good to themselves.

James. It is not possible in the nature of things, that infants should be capable of those exercises which you suppose absolutely necessary for salvation, and of course all who die in infancy, agreeable to your ideas are inevitably lost.

John. Infants are made in miniature, and possess the same faculties as men, only in a very small degree. If they are not men in miniature, I would thank you to

inform me at what period they become so. If infants possess all the faculties of men, however small the degree, even if it is less than we can conceive of, then God is as able to regenerate them by the special operation of his spirit, and change their natures as he is an adult. For it is written, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise," and it appears from scripture that Samuel, Jeremiah, and John the baptist were regenerated in childhood.

James. It appears evident from scripture that real Christians may fall from grace, which if fact, will totally destroy your idea of special grace on a certain number only.

John. I would thank you to quote those passages of scripture which you suppose establish the possibility of true Christians falling from a state of holiness, so as finally to fail of salvation.

James. I conceive the doctrine very fully taught. The Apostle speaks in positive language to some of the Church, "Ye are fallen from grace." Again, "But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him:" "Holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck." "When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them, for his iniquity that he hath done, shall he die." And every command to watch and pray and be steadfast, implies, that there is not only a possibility but even great danger of Christians finally falling away to everlasting destruction.

John. I acknowledge, if there were no other passages of scripture on the subject, except those you have quoted, I should say these

imply it, but not positively declare it; but we must compare scripture with scripture, and not take passages unconnected; if we do, direct contradictions may be found. But one passage that you have quoted is positive, and that is taken without connection. The whole connection is thus, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace"; so that no one is represented as fallen from grace, except those who are justified by the law; and the apostle says, by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified, and that there is salvation in no other name but Jesus Christ: But his meaning evidently was, that they had fallen from the plan of grace, to wit, justification by Christ, and depended on the works of the law for justification; such put away faith in Christ, and make shipwreck of it, and go about to establish their own righteousness, which is like filthy rags; which was the case of many nominal Christians in the apostle's day. I do by no means deny, that many receive the word with joy who have no root or true grace in them, who finally draw back unto perdition. But it is evident from what the apostle says, when speaking on the subject, that real Christians never draw back; he says, when addressing them who were of God's elect, "But we are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." When God has fixed an event, he has fixed the means to bring it about; and it is God's usual method to enjoin the fulfilment of the means necessary in order to accomplish his purpose. Christ informed his true disciples that they should sit on thrones in his kingdom of

glory, and that their names were written in heaven, so they were sure of salvation; and then enjoined perseverance in every good work, which was necessary to bring them there.—The angel of the Lord stood by Paul at the time of his shipwreck, and positively told him, that not one life in the ship should be lost; but when some were about to go out of the ship into the boat, Paul said, "except these abide in the ship they cannot be saved." So if a righteous man should forsake his righteousness, and sin wilfully, there would remain no more sacrifice for sin. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,—if they should fall away, to renew them again to repentance." And it no more follows that the righteous do forsake their righteousness, because the consequence is pointed out, if they should, than that an angel from heaven will be accursed for preaching a new doctrine, as the consequence is pointed out, if he should. The apostle says, if an angel from heaven preach any other doctrine, let him be accursed.—As I find passages of scripture directly in favor of final perseverance, and none absolutely against it, I am bound to believe it a scripture doctrine.

James. I wish you would quote those passages.

John. It is evident from scripture, that Christ has a church which he has purchased with his own precious blood; and it is his own property, and no being has right or power to take it from him, and nothing shall separate it

from his love ; neither tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword—neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, or any other creature.”

Christ says, “all that the Father giveth me shall come to me.”

Again: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit *should* remain.” “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.”

The apostle saith, “being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it, until the day of Jesus Christ.” God says to his children, “I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever.” Here God promises to fulfil on his part, and then engages that his children shall not fail on theirs. I might proceed, in producing more passages of scripture directly to the point, but enough have already been adduced to satisfy every one who hath eyes to see, or ears to hear.

James. If the doctrine that saints will infallibly persevere is true, will it not have a tendency to relax Christians, in the performance of every good word and work ?

John. To every one whose religion consists in selfishness, I acknowledge it would not be a very

stimulating doctrine, for he would feel that his personal interest was secure, and that would satisfy him. But one whose religion consists in supreme love to God, and sincere benevolence, has no evidence of being a true child of God, only in finding a constant habit of forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth towards those that are before, and in pressing forward towards the mark of the prize of his high calling of God in Christ Jesus. To such an one, I conceive it one of the most stimulating doctrines of the gospel. I suppose that God’s positively telling Hezekiah that he had added to his days fifteen years, was the most *persuasive* argument *possible* to induce him to use the means prescribed for his recovery.—The Lord told Paul that he must bear witness of him at Rome ; so that he was certain of being preserved until he arrived there : Yet when he knew that certain Jews had bound themselves under an oath to kill him, he took every means possible to preserve his life, so that he might preach at Rome also. But had Hezekiah and Paul possessed a spirit of tempting the Lord, one might have said, he had God’s positive word he should be healed, and there was no necessity of using any means, for his recovery was certain ; and he might go on farther, and refuse his daily food, as he had the infallible promise of God that he should live fifteen years ; and the other might have said, he would take no care to save his life on his journey, as he was sure of visiting Rome. But this cavil is by no means a new one. Satan told our Saviour if he was the Son of God to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple ; insinuating that there was no necessity of taking prudent

care of himself, for it was impossible he should be hurt; for he had the promise of God that he would give his angels charge concerning him, that in their hands they should bear him up, &c. And Christ's answer to Satan may apply to all who insinuate such presumption; "Again it is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

James. What is the manner of the special operation of the spirit?

John. It is like the wind; we see its effect, and feel its influence; "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the spirit."

James. If the spirit moves in a sovereign manner, how is it possible for us to obtain its influence when we wish?

John. "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." And God's sovereign promise satisfies every one that has confidence in his veracity.

James. How shall I determine whether I am a subject of special grace, or not?

John. If by self examination you find that you delight in the divine perfections, and love God supremely for what he is in himself, and that you love his law which pronounces a curse on the least transgression; that you rejoice in being in his hands as clay is in the potter's; that you rejoice in his reigning an uncontrolled sovereign, and that the government of all worlds is with him; that you disrelish sin in every form, and it is your greatest enemy, let you see

it where you will, even if it is in yourself; that you delight in prayer to God, in a public, private and social manner, and are constant in the duty every day; that you esteem Christ's children as the precious ones of the earth, and seek them as your constant companions; and that you rejoice in the glorious plan of salvation by Jesus Christ, and esteem him the chiefest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely, and depend on him *alone* for justification; that you delight in *his* law after the inward man, and walk in humble obedience, and finally glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; if you can say sincerely that you possess in some degree these exercises, then I can say unto you, blessed art thou—for flesh and blood have not revealed this unto you.

James. Well John, we have continued our conversation much longer than I first contemplated, and my mind is so full I want a little time to digest it; if you please we will at present drop the subject, and at some future period resume it.

John. I am perfectly agreed; and may we humbly beseech him with whom is the residue of the spirit, to pour it out upon us, and turn us from nature's darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel—so that we may behold the beauty of the divine character in his works of providence and grace, and join in hearts with all holy beings in heaven and on earth, in the celebration of his praise, love and goodness.—Farewell.

The Gospel more glorious than the Law.

IN illustrating this subject, the writer is sensible that it becomes him to proceed with cau-

tious steps, lest he should derogate from the purity and importance of the law. The following observations, on this subject, are thought to accord with the holy scriptures; and are humbly submitted to the editors of the Evangelical Magazine, with a desire, that if they are deemed worthy of being made public, God might thereby be glorified.

r. The law killeth, but the gospel giveth life.—To the sinner the law is death. It exhibits no indulgence, no mercy to transgressors.—The language of the law is this—“*Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*”—To the whole human race the law would prove to be the ministration of death, were it not for the gospel. The truth of this is realized, when the holy God fastens the arrows of conviction on the conscience of the guilty sinner. He is then ready to adopt the words of the apostle Paul, when he was relating his own experiences—“*But sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.*” Here we see an essential difference between the law and the gospel, as fallen men are respected.—The law declares the sinner to be undone; and the gospel views him in the same condition, but it proclaims life to him, thro’ the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, speaking of the institution of the Christian ministry, the apostle says, “*Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of*

the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”—It is important to observe, that the law and the gospel harmonize, as to their requirements and threatenings. The law requires holiness, and so does the gospel. The law views the sinner as possessing a most odious character, and so does the gospel. The law says the disobedient deserve to be punished with everlasting destruction; the gospel says the same. As holiness and sin are respected, the law and the gospel perfectly harmonize. But the latter is the most glorious; because, while it represents the sinner to be every way as vile, and as helpless as the law does, it exhibits *life* to him. It presents a remedy, which is equal to the deplorable state of the sinner. In this, the law, tho’ infinitely pure, and infinitely worthy of our love, altogether fails. It knows no mercy, it admits of no forgiveness. Truly the law has glory, but its glory is outshone by the gospel. As the salvation of sinners is respected, the law is said to be weak. The apostle speaks of it in this light, —“*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak thro’ the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.*” While, therefore, we see the gospel harmonizing with the law, in its views of sin and holiness, we are taught that it possesses strength, where the law is nothing but weakness—that it possesses infinite riches, where the law has not a single favor to bestow—yea, that it freely offers eternal life, where the law has nothing to present but eternal death. Between the law and the gospel, therefore, is

there not some difference? Is not the glory of the latter far greater than that of the former? Well might the apostle say,—“*If the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.*”

2. The gospel brings out the justice of God more clearly than the law. Justice is an essential attribute of God, a bright and glorious perfection of his nature. If God were not just, his creatures could have no confidence in his government. It is important, that this perfection of divine nature should be displayed before intelligent creatures, that they may see the glory of God. The gospel, in a peculiar manner, makes this display. In this respect, it surpasses the law as much as the light of the sun exceeds that of the stars. The law declares God's hatred of sin; but the gospel has brought this hatred out to view far more clearly. Angels and men, by the light which the gospel affords, have been made to see, that God is determined to maintain a righteous government, and that he will be known as a sin-hating God. The gospel shows us, that God is infinitely attached to the law, and that he never will give up one jot or tittle of it. In what way could there have been so striking proof of this given, as in the death of Christ on the cross? That angels and men might see him display his hatred of sin, and might have unquestionable proof his being a God of inflexible justice, he spared not his own Son. He gave him up to die a shameful death on the cross. In this great event, the justice of God shone with peculiar lustre, even so as to

astonish all holy beings. In the death of Christ, the law was magnified and made honorable far more than it was when given to Moses on Mount Sinai. Had it not been for the gospel, for the coming and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, we never should have known, as we now have opportunity to know, how infinitely strong is God's attachment to the law, and how determined he is to appear to the universe as a being of justice. God has now given the greatest possible proof of his justice, because he has not spared his own Son.

3. Without the gospel mercy could never have been revealed. Mercy is that attribute of the divine nature which manifests itself in bestowing favors on the ill-deserving and miserable. The law gives no intimation that God possesses such an attribute, or that transgressors may have the least ground to hope for the divine favour. It is acknowledged, that in the second commandment of the decalogue, we find the following clause—*Shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.* But, this copy of the divine law was given to a people, who had before been made acquainted with the promises of the gospel; and the clause, referred to, undoubtedly alludes to the gospel. There is also a clause in the fifth commandment, which was introduced with particular reference to the state of that people, as journeying to the land of Canaan. The clause is this: *That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* Here is an intimation of God's mercy and patience; but it was given to a people, who had previous knowledge that with God there is forgiveness. It was whol-

ly on this ground, that such clauses as these were introduced into the law, as it was there given. The divine law had existed before, even in the days of Adam. A summary of it was given by the Saviour in the following words:—

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.”

The love, here required, is *perfect love*; and the law can give life, on no other condition. Strictly speaking, the law knows no mercy, nor the least indulgence. But, the gospel is good news to *transgressors*, to those who deserve all that the law *threatens*. It is good news, because it makes the offer of pardon to the guilty, through the blood of Jesus Christ. In the light of the gospel, we can see how God can be just, and yet justify as many as believe on the Son of God. Tho’ the gospel is not in opposition to the law; yet it exhibits what the law cannot, viz. *a dying Saviour*. The *invitations* of the gospel do not, in the least, interfere with the honor and dignity of the broken law. Wonderful mercy is here revealed, such as never could have been known, if mankind had not become sinners, and the eternal Son of God had not appeared as their Saviour. How plainly it appears, therefore, that the gospel has brought out to view an important attribute of the divine nature—a glorious perfection, which must have been forever concealed from the view of creatures, if it had not been for the gospel. Is not the work of redemption far superior to that of creation? The world was created, that there might, as it were, be a theatre, on which the glorious work of redemption might be carried on.

The gospel states the incarnation of the Son of God—it brings out to view his atoning blood, and opens a door for lost creatures, as we all are, to view ourselves prisoners of hope.

Far more of the great and holy God is seen in the gospel, than could ever have been seen in the law; tho’ it is as pure as a law possibly could be. The gospel brings out the great doctrine of the Trinity, in a clear light; and in the accomplishment of the work of redemption, the necessity of this doctrine is made to appear. We are taught the necessity of a Saviour to atone, and of the Holy Spirit to sanctify. The light of the gospel, as it reveals mercy, excites the astonishment of angels; for they are represented in the word of God, as desiring to look into these things. We have reason to think, that the work of redemption is their chief study, the great and delightful theme of their contemplations. When we thus compare the law with the gospel, particularly as mercy and the forgiveness of sin are respected, we may say: Wherein the former is *darkness* the latter is *light*. For the law does not shew one sin forgiven; but the gospel presents forgiveness to all who are willing to accept it, and to forsake their sins. Christ did not come into the world to be the minister of sin; nor did he die on the cross, that mankind might be saved in their sins, or as impenitent. He died that mercy might be offered to all; and that pardon might be bestowed on as many as should repent of their sins and forsake them. How greatly are mankind indebted to God for the gospel! How are their views of the divine character enlarged, by the light of the gos-

pel, especially as they see God glorifying himself, in forgiving the chief of sinners!

4. The nature of sin and the character of the sinner could never have been known, as they now are, had it not been for the gospel.—But to the idea now advanced are not some ready to urge as an objection—that, *by the law is the knowledge of sin*? Truly the scriptures declare this, and it is no doubt a just sentiment. But while it is admitted, that by the law is the knowledge of sin, it is considered as being a solemn truth, that sinners, under the light and instructions of the gospel, are chargeable with far greater sins, than they could be with no other light than the law affords. Since the gospel has been preached, the depravity of men has been made to appear, in a light, of which men, perhaps, would never have conceived.—Would it not have been supposed, if the contrary had not been made to appear by fact, that sinners, when assured of their condemnation by the law, and that they never could be saved by it, would gladly have received the gospel? Would it not have been supposed, that they would be thankful for a space for repentance and for the offer of pardon; and that, when their immortal souls were at stake, they would eagerly embrace the opportunity of being saved by Christ? But, alas! the publishing of the gospel, and the pressing manner in which it has been recommended to sinners, have made the contrary fully appear. By this, it has been clearly proved, that sinners have wickedness and obstinacy enough in their hearts to neglect and despise a day of grace, when procured for them, and procured too at an infinite price. The man-

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ner in which sinners treat the divine Saviour, who condescended to come into the world and die for them, brings out more of the depravity and stupidity of the human heart, than their opposition to the law. In this way, we learn more than we could in any other way, how deplorable is their situation, and how completely lost and undone. The law was glorious, in that it brought out the odious nature of sin; but the gospel, in this respect, was more glorious. That, which was made glorious, had no glory, by reason of that which excelleth. And as the gospel gives us enlarged views of depravity, it must of course be the means of making a very bright display of that justice, which will finally punish the despisers of the Saviour, while, at the same time, it establishes the doctrine, that the salvation of the redeemed is wholly of God.

H.

TO THE REV. EDITORS OF THE
CONNECTICUT EVANGELICAL
MAGAZINE.

On the reasonableness of an immediate Repentance.

I SEND the following observations for insertion in your useful Magazine, should it be thought proper.

IN the second Epistle to the Corinthians, at the 6th chapter and 2d verse, it is written: "*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*" These words afford abundant matter for exhortation, and, to the impenitent, abundant cause of alarm. The obvious declaration of the passage is, that the present moment is the most proper time to repent of sin, and be reconciled to God. It shall be my endeavor

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vor to show that this doctrine is reasonable, and that it is the dictate of true wisdom to yield an immediate compliance with what it enjoins.

It may be proper to mention, that I am particularly addressing those who admit the Scriptures to be the word of God, and who believe them to teach the necessity of a total change of heart, before we can have any hope from the gospel. There are, doubtless, persons of this description, who are not experimentally acquainted with the power of godliness; there are persons who have a speculative conviction of the interesting truths of revelation, who yet continue to halt between two opinions, and put themselves off with the delusive expectation that they shall repent at some future time, and become renewed in the spirit and temper of their minds before they die. Such persons are requested to attend to some dispassionate reasoning on the subject.

If each of the following arguments is not possessed of intrinsic weight, let it fall to the ground. I claim no merit in bringing them forward; but rather esteem it a glorious privilege, that most of the readers of this Magazine have heard them insisted on from the pulpit with very great ability and force. Experience and observation, however, as well as the oracles of truth, assure us, that it is not improper to inculcate *line upon line, and precept upon precept*. There is some small hope, then, that persons may receive benefit from perusing reflections on the same topics, which they have heretofore heard and seen discussed in a manner much more ample and convincing.

1. It is obvious to every person that he must die. *Dust thou*

art, and unto dust shalt thou return, is an assertion which it seems impossible even for wicked men to disbelieve. Not a person who will read these lines can make himself believe, or even hope, that he shall not, in a few years at the most, be laid under the cold clods of the valley. Now let us take this fact and compare it with another equally true, which is, that if we are ever reconciled to God, this work must be accomplished before death. One would think that these two facts afford an argument for immediate repentance which must find its way to every considerate mind. Yet how numerous are the instances of persons who acknowledge its force, and still remain altogether unmoved with respect to the things which it brings into view. Those things pertaining to this world which are deemed more important, are not treated in this negligent manner. When a person has in contemplation an object, by the attainment of which he may aggrandize himself, or bring comfort to his family, he sets about it immediately, and pursues it with assiduity and perseverance, rising above obstacles seemingly insurmountable, till he obtains the accomplishment of his desires. This conduct with respect to the deceitful, unsatisfying, perishable things of time, is called wisdom by the world. How great, then, is the folly of neglecting all endeavors to procure an interest in God's favor, which is life, and in his loving kindness, which is better than life!

2. The force of the foregoing argument is inconceivably increased by the consideration, that the life of man is totally uncertain. We cannot help knowing, however unpleasant the knowledge

may be, that the young and the old, the healthy and the diseased, the beautiful and the deformed, are continually and indiscriminately going down to the grave. We cannot but know, that many of our companions, or perhaps our parents, brethren and sisters, have passed from time into eternity. We cannot but know, that the length of our lives depends entirely upon the will of God, and that he has not given us security for a single future moment. He is under no obligation to uphold us in life, and he will not do it any longer than is necessary to bring about his wise and holy designs, which are to us inscrutable. He has declared, that *man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.* We can give no reason why we are now continued on the earth, while others younger and better than ourselves have been carried to the silent tomb, except that it is the will of him, *who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.* In this view of the subject, how foolish is it, how extremely hazardous, to delay a preparation for death a single day. How dreadful is the thought, that while men improve every advantage to obtain the good things of this life, and take every precaution to secure them, they are entirely unmoved and heedless while their eternal well-being may depend upon the wise improvement of the present opportunity.

3. Human life is very short at the longest. Although this assertion may seem strange to inconsiderate youth, yet they may obtain complete satisfaction that it is true. Ask the aged, those who

have arrived to threescore and ten, whether their lives have not been short. Ask them whether it is wise to pursue the things of time and sense, as tho' they constituted the supreme good, even were men sure they should live to see their seventieth year. Will they not tell you, that life is as deceitful in its length, as in the enjoyments which it promises; and that whoever presumes on either, will most certainly be disappointed? Will they not tell you, that their years appear shorter and shorter as the number of them increases, and that their days pass *as a tale that is told*? Indeed, cannot all who have arrived to years of discretion, if they will consult their own minds with respect to the time which is past, come to a complete assurance, that the life of man is not of so great duration as they may be tempted to imagine? The man of thirty five cannot suppose, that, should he double his years, his life will appear of very great extent. If persons would yield to the evidence which their own experience affords them, they could never doubt that the time of our temporal existence is, in all instances, exceedingly short and fleeting.

But the language of the Bible is wonderfully striking and explicit. When the Patriarch was inquired of by the king of Egypt, with respect to his age, he gave this affecting answer: *The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.* The afflicted Job exclaimed: *My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle.* And again: *My days are swifter than a post.* For what is your life? inquires the inspired Apostle: *It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.* It is impossible

to find images more expressive of shortness and speed, than those which inspiration has chosen on this subject.

But if life be thus short and fleeting at the longest, where would be the wisdom of deferring repentance, even were we sure of being continued to old age? On the other hand, does not this consideration alone afford sufficient cause of alarm to the impenitent; and ought it not to arouse them from this death-like lethargy to pay a serious and earnest attention to the things which belong to their everlasting peace?

C. Y. A.

(*To be continued.*)

Hampshire Missionary Society.

THE Trustees and Members of the Hampshire Missionary Society, impressed with a sense of the sacred importance of the object of their association, beg leave, with reference to this object, to address themselves to the professors and friends of religion, in general, and more particularly to those in the county of Hampshire.

BRETHREN,

WHEN we consider the nature and design of the gospel; the astonishing manner, in which it was first communicated to our fallen race; the extraordinary means by which it was propagated among the nations of the earth; and the wonderful providence, by which it has been preserved to this day, and transmitted to us; we feel an obligation lying on ourselves, and we see an obligation lying on its friends in general, to contribute, as there is opportunity, to its greater in-

fluence and wider diffusion. For this purpose the Hampshire Missionary Society was instituted, its measures adopted, and the assistance of its friends solicited.

The zeal, which has been remarkably kindled; and the exertions, which have been laudably displayed, within these few years, in various parts of the Christian world, for the spread of the gospel among the heathens, and for the advancement of its interests nearer home, justify the hope, that God is about to accomplish some great work in favor of his church; and the concurrence of Christians of different communions in these benevolent exertions, strengthens the pleasing expectation. The reports of Missionaries, in different places, concerning their reception and success among the people, to whom they have been sent, encourage us still to continue, and farther to increase our exertions in the prosecution of the work, which we have begun.

Our Society is in its infancy: It has but little strength, and has had but little time. What it could do, that it has done. And the information given us of our past success animates us to persevere in our labors.

The field for Missionary labors in America is extensive, and the laborers employed in this field are few in relation to the work which may be done. Its wide extent and the necessities of the people within it exceed our first apprehensions, and impress us with a stronger idea of the importance of our missions, than we had then conceived.

Besides the information communicated by our own, and other Missionaries, we have received letters from people in our new settlements—some signed by respectable individuals—some signed by

numbers—stating their unhappy situation with regard to the enjoyment of gospel privileges ; expressing their joy and gratitude for our charitable attention to their case ; respecting the good which has already been done, and the great and effectual door which is opened for doing more ; requesting a share in our future charities ; signifying their hope, that, by our help, they may be led to the enjoyment of a stated ministry ; and promising in the mean time, such individual contributions to the cause, as their abilities will permit, or their influence can procure.

While we feel ourselves happy in a free and full enjoyment of the gospel of our salvation, can we with unfeeling hearts, contemplate the destitute condition of thousands of our fellow immortals scattered in the wilderness, and wandering as sheep which have no shepherd ?—Many of them possess not books of piety, nor even bibles for their private and family use ; nor can they, in their present situation, easily purchase them. Few of them enjoy the stated ministration of the word and ordinances of Christ ; and by reason of the paucity of their number in some places, and their dispersed situation in others—by reason of interfering habits and prejudices brought with them from the different parts from which they came—and for want of leading and influential characters, duly animated with a sense of religion, they are utterly unable without some temporary aid from the charity of others, to unite in measures for obtaining this important privilege.

How easy it is for many of us, from the competence which God has given us, to contribute, each

one a mite for their relief ? And who knows what infinite and everlasting benefit may accrue to multitudes, and redound to himself, from a mite thrown into the treasury of God ?

It will perhaps be asked ; “ Are not many in the wilderness more wealthy than some of us ? ”—It may be so. But their wealth, at present, is of a kind, which cannot so easily be applied to this object. We will set them an example, how to use their wealth, when it can be thus applied. Some of these young settlements, we hope, will soon emerge from their present condition, and rise into populous towns. Let us diffuse among them the benevolent spirit of the gospel, that they, in their turn, may contribute to the aid of those, who shall then be more necessitous than they. We mean not, that they should be eased and you burdened ; but now, at this present time, let your abundance be a supply for their want, that so, in a future time, their abundance may be a supply for the want of others, and that thus there may be an equality.

Say not, in excuse for neglecting them, “ they for worldly prosperity, went away from the gospel, and we will not send it after them.” Some went away urged by necessity. These surely are objects of charity.

If some left the gospel thro’ indifference to it, there is less hope, that they will seek it ; but not less reason, why they need it ; and there is therefore greater cause why we should send it. And who knows, but some, who despised it, when they enjoyed it, may appreciate it now since they are deprived of it ? There have been such cases.

Will you say ; ‘ You are not

bound to exercise your charity to them before it is asked?" It is asked—asked by great numbers; and asked in such pressing and affecting terms, as piety and charity cannot easily resist. Many, no doubt, are indifferent to the gospel; and some, it may be, disbelieve it. From them a request is not expected. But remember, they have immortal souls—they have families—they have children. Who knows but some of the careless may be awakened by the gospel when it comes to them? Who knows, but some who oppose it, if they should be instructed with meekness, may receive the truth, and recover themselves out of the snare in which they are taken? Who knows, but the tender minds of children and youth may be savingly impressed with divine truth, even tho' their parents remain regardless of it? But what hope shall we have for these unhappy children, if they enjoy no means of salvation, but what *careless* parents afford them? Every objection of this kind, justly viewed, will turn to a pressing argument for our charitable exertions. Let us imitate the goodness of God: 'He is found of some, who sought him not: He is made manifest to some, who enquired not after him.'

Will any say, 'We know not that our charities will do any good?' Good has been done: We hope more may be done. 'Cast your bread on the water; and after many days you will receive it again. In the morning sow your seed, and at evening withhold not your hand; for you know not, whether shall prosper this or that, or whether both shall be alike good.'

We hope, you may expect a prudent, or at least a faithful application of your charities. Accurate accounts will still be kept of

the liberalities which we receive, and of the disbursements which we make, and these accounts will be communicated for public information. The members of our society are considerably numerous, and are citizens of all classes; and all our transactions are open to the view of our fellow-citizens. We aim, that you shall have every security for our faithfulness in the trust committed to us, that we are able to give you.

We have begun our work with a design, and with a hope to promote the cause of the Redeemer, and serve the interest of immortal souls. As we proceed, the prospect brightens. But our funds are small; and without additional supplies, they will soon be exhausted, and the work begun must be discontinued. We hope that the charity so laudably exercised already, will still abound, and that the zeal of those, who first showed a forwardness in this work, will provoke very many. 'Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work.'

SAMUEL HOPKINS,
Vice-President.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE CONNECTICUT EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE.

Gentlemen,

AMONG the many instructive and animating publications which have appeared in your Magazine, none seem better calculated to subserve the cause of piety in general, and of personal improvement in religion in particular; and at

the same time to exhibit displays of sovereign grace, than biographical sketches of persons, who, having been subjects of divine influence, have maintained a conversation becoming the gospel.

Desirous of contributing to the fulfilment of this part of your original plan, we present you with the following Memoirs; in which we have endeavored to draw some leading features in the character of Mrs. *Hepsa Ely*, late consort of the Rev. David Ely, of Huntington.

In her life she approved herself a person of sincere piety and true Christian benevolence, and in the near approaches of death was favored with very exalted views and delightful foretastes of the heavenly world. By giving our attempt a place in your useful publication, you will oblige

Your brethren,

ELISHA REXFORD,

STEPHEN W. STEBBINS,

SAM'L BLATCHFORD.

Dec. 22, 1803.

THE subject of the following biographical sketch was grand daughter of the Reverend Jedidiah Mills, the first minister of the gospel in Ripton, who died January 24, 1776, after having been mercifully continued in the ministry nearly 52 years, exhibiting a character at once pious, laborious and evangelical. Her father, Elisha Mills, Esq. (of whom she was the third daughter) trained up his family in a strict attention to moral and religious duties, and was, probably, the means of begetting in his daughter a tenderness of conscience for which she was remarkable in her earliest youth, which, joined with a natural amiableness of disposition, rendered her exceedingly interesting

and lovely; and this the Lord, who had graciously marked her for his own, was pleased divinely to increase by his own peculiar operations upon her heart.—The religious impressions and deep conviction, which preceded her hopeful conversion, took place in the year 1769 when she had attained the 14th year of her age. These, it seems, were occasioned by the sudden and, in its circumstances, uncommon death of a young woman in the neighborhood, and continued for several weeks very strong and pungent. Her sin and danger appeared to her exceeding great, and, bowed down under a sense of her vileness and misery, her distress, tho' not for the whole time equally acute, was not removed until she was ushered into marvellous light. Now it was, that for the first time she saw the glory, beauty and all-sufficiency of Christ; and such were her views of the attractive excellencies of his character, presenting her with free offers of pardon and gracious acceptance, that her soul, raised from the dust, rejoiced in hope of the glory of God, and longed to show to others the richness and freeness of the Redeemer's love that they might be saved.—It was in this year she made a public profession of religion, happy in the opportunity of having her name enrolled amongst those who called Jesus their Master and Lord.

She was married December 18th, 1777, to the Rev. *David Ely*, who was ordained colleague pastor with her grandfather October 27, 1773. And, as with pleasure we contemplate a picture where the proportions are exact and the tints are blended with softness and precision, so do we trace her in those important rela-

tions which providence permitted her to sustain.

As a *wife*, she was faithful, constant and affectionate, so that the heart of her husband did safely trust in her. And as the wife of a minister, where much depends on the conduct of his help-meet, she was discreet and exemplary; at all times shewing herself to be that prudent wife which is from the Lord, securing and maintaining at once the esteem and affection of the people.

As a *parent*, she was tender and indulgent, anxiously solicitous and watchful for the best interest of her children, and by word and deed recommended to them religion as the thing of all things most important. She had nurtured them with tenderness, and in their infancy had devoted them to God; and viewing the salvation of their souls of infinite moment, she seized the earliest opportunities of instilling into their young and tender minds, the most important and solemn truths of the Christian religion, that they might grow up for God. She was abundant in care, in counsel, and in prayer, in catechising and teaching them a reverence for God's house and the Lord's day. —She had the pleasure of seeing *three* of them become professors of the religion of Christ. Her domestics also shared in her instructions; whose minds she endeavored to impress with the realities of eternity and the necessity of inward holiness.

As a *Child*, she was dutiful and affectionate, obeying with real pleasure the first commandment with promise. In *friendship* sincere, constant and free from disguise. Her manners were modest and unassuming; uniting decision and dignity with gentleness & easiness of access.

Diligence and economy marked her *domestic* character; and being much at home she looked well to the care of her household and guided her affairs with discretion. She possessed great evenness of temper, not easily depressed or elevated, and it was a noticeable trait in her character, that under disappointments and adverse providences she was silent and submissive.

In her heart dwelt the law of kindness and of course she was given to hospitality. The poor, she sent not empty away, and if they bore the image of Christ, she loved them for *his* sake, and did them good as she had opportunity.

She was favored with a lively *experience* of divine things; possessed a sacred awe of the divine majesty, hated sin and longed for an absolute conformity to God's will. At times, she had exalted and refreshing views of Christ in his mediatorial character; and at the Lord's table, she sometimes enjoyed sweet communion with her ascended Lord, and divine refreshings of soul by the Holy Ghost. Yet, notwithstanding this, she abhorred her own self and often mourned over her own blindness and deadness of spirit—she lamented her little love to God and was humbled under a sense that she did so little for his honor—she seemed well to understand the doctrines of grace, and Christ was her hope of glory. A deep and affecting sense of the infinite purity of the divine character, the perfection and holiness of God's law, were so impressed upon her heart that she considered it as utterly impossible to escape condemnation, but in a way of sovereign grace, thro' the merits of the great Redeemer; and in this she rejoiced, because, "otherwise,"

she said, "she could have no hope."

Whenever she heard of a revival of religion, her heart was made glad, and she longed for the universal extension of Christ's kingdom, that he might be all and in all.

Her constitution was delicate from her youth; but in September 1800, she was visited with that sickness, from which she never entirely recovered. This was attended with great debility, and her life began to hang in doubt. In the summer following, however, her health in some degree was mended; but frequent paroxysms of pain and indisposition, kept her very low and terminated in a gradual decline.—On the 26th of September last she resigned her spirit.—During her long decline, she indulged, as she was able, her love for mental improvement; and, with a view to this, she read much. Her choice of books was regulated by her refined and spiritual taste; and with much pleasure she read Edwards' History of Redemption. The works of the pious John Newton, which she much admired; especially the three first volumes containing his Life and Letters, and his volumes entitled "the Messiah." Bishop Newton on the Prophecies. Reader and Guise "on the Revelations."—The last winter, she repeatedly read Dr. Haweis' Sermons entitled "Evangelical Principles and Practice," and expressed of them a high esteem, and said, "*she never read any sermons from which she thought she had derived so much spiritual advantage as from these;*" and the effect was visible. She esteemed Dr. Doddridge's "Rise and Progress," and read Mrs. Rowe's "Devout exercises of the heart" with pleasure, but

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said "*she could not attain to such high and noble exercises.*"—The History of the Church engaged her attention; this afforded much entertainment, and she would frequently converse upon it with delight. She admired the divine care and protection it received in all its different periods and various dangers, from its great Head and Almighty Ruler; and rejoiced in its prospects of increase and prosperity in the latter day.

But of all books, she read none with so much delight, care, attention and examination as her BIBLE. This for the last years of her life she emphatically made the man of her counsel and the law of God was her delight.

These were helps and means which God had put in her power; and prevented as she was for three years from going up to the house of God except once, she rejoiced in them, and profited by them, exhibiting great patience and justifying God in all he laid upon her—and it is believed that the Lord overruled the trial of her long sickness as the mean of producing a more triumphant death; for it was manifest, that as her outward man decayed, her inward man waxed stronger and stronger. The taper of life wasted, but light increased upon her soul.

As her illness progressed and the prospect of recovery was fled, a perfect calmness and composure of mind attended her; so that, altho' the agonies of dying, even in contemplation, are distressing, yet the prospect which opened to her view on being unclothed, caused her to wish she might drop her clay. She often said, "*I would not live away—I long to be unclothed—I know that my Redeemer liveth and that I shall see him for myself; that if she could but once*

X x

set her foot on the shores of the heavenly Canaan, she would not wish a return; that she had been a poor unprofitable servant in the Lord's vineyard, and had no hope of acceptance with God on account of any thing she had ever done, but her dependance for the enjoyment of everlasting happiness was on the mercy of God through the merits of her dear Redeemer."

About a fortnight before her death, her eldest son asked her in the morning how she had been thro' the night; she answered, "Very poor—I believe I must die. If I have the presence of God, 'tis no matter when.—It is every thing to have a Saviour on a dying bed!—This life is a mere bubble, 'tis only a scene of distress.—The pleasures of being with Christ are so great as to render small and tolerable the pangs of dying.—Pray that my faith fail not; that I may have foretastes of heaven; that I may have such views and prospects of the glories of the future world as not to desire to return to the enjoyments of this."—Her husband standing by her bed, looking at him, she said, "This is a dark and rugged road to death. Oh, that when we are once thro' the gate we may not wish to be back again." Seeing him tenderly affected with her situation, she said, "If you loved me you would rejoice because I go to the Father." About the same time, she said to her husband, "I am unable to read, I wish you to read to me." He asked her, if he should read that chapter in Doddridge's Rise and Progress which he wished to have read to him on his dying bed; she answered, "Oh no! nothing but the PURE SCRIPTURE;" and the 14th chapter of John was read.—Upon receiving a cluster of grapes, the smell of which was refreshing to her, she said, "Oh, how I long to drink wine in my Heavenly Father's

kingdom." She often expressed herself that she was afraid she should be impatient to wait for her dismissal, desiring to depart. She conversed freely with ministers, who visited her repeatedly in her sickness, and gave them the reasons of her hope. It would be impossible to detail at large all she said on those occasions. To one, she spoke of her affectionate attachment to her husband and children, but observed, "she loved Christ better"; to another—"That she was almost home. That she did not know she had what was called the faith of assurance, but she had a hope of an interest in the Lord Jesus, which she would not part with for ten thousand worlds." On being asked what was the nature of the glory which she had in view, she said, "to sin no more, and to be like Christ."

Some days before her death, her three brothers visiting her together, she addressed them with great tenderness and affection, recommending to them religion as the one thing needful, and as what only could give support on a dying bed.

To her children she said, "The best legacy I can leave you is to desire you to make your calling and election sure—to prepare to meet in that great world, where there shall be no separation of friends, where all shall be happiness divine;"—and with a remarkable solemnity added, "let no consideration prevent your making it the great business of your lives; and if so, a few more suns will bring us to meet again."

The morning of the day before her death she desired a continuance of the prayers of the church, that she might have patience and resignation, observing that "this was the last time."

At noon she said to her husband, "If you see any signs that I

*am dying do let me know it—
Welcome death—I am prepared to
die thro' the grace of my Redeemer
—I hope.*—Then she expressed
tenderness and concern for her
husband and children, and com-
mended them to God.

At night, whilst the agonies of
death were upon her, she said but
little; but retained her hope and
confidence. About half an hour
before she expired, being unable
to speak, her husband desired her,
that if her faith and hope remain-
ed unshaken, and that she still de-
sired to depart, to give him notice
by squeezing his hand, which she
instantly did; and at six o'clock
in the morning she resigned her
spirit, at the age of 48 years, leav-
ing a husband and five children
mourning the loss of her whose
price was above rubies.

"Oh! if my Lord would come and meet,
"My soul should stretch her wings in
haste,

"Fly fearless thro' death's iron gate,

"Nor feel the terrors as she pass'd.

"Jesus can make a dying bed

"Feel soft as downy pillows are,

"While on his breast I lean my head,

"And breathe my life out sweetly there."

The preceding memoir, in a
most persuasive manner, recom-
mends the sweetness and excellen-
cy of true religion. It calls upon
parents to pay the most sedulous
attention to the education of their
children in the knowledge of di-
vine truths and the practice of re-
ligious duties; for in this way
impressions very useful and lasting
are often made, and the light of
conviction hath a free operation
on the mind; a tenderness of con-
science is frequently produced,
and the soul is laid open to the
influences of the Holy Spirit.

Religion is the one thing need-
ful; it enhances the value of every
natural excellence, and affords a

lustre to the character which no-
thing else can produce. It ena-
bles the happy subjects of it to
fill every station in which they are
placed with the most beautiful
propriety, and to act their part
well amidst all the changing scenes
of human life. They enjoy pros-
perity with moderation, and, in a
religious view, flourish on care
and grow by adversity. It is a
balm which affords health and
vigor to the soul when loss of
health brings langour upon the
body. It vouchsafes an entertain-
ment in its holy exercises of read-
ing, meditation and prayer which
the world cannot give nor take
away. It fixes the foundation of
happiness upon communion with
God, and a likeness to his moral
image. It begets the most pleas-
ing evidences of real union with
Christ, and the certainty of all
things working together for their
good. Their souls are not unfre-
quently permitted to reach the de-
lightful assurance of title to eternal
life thro' him who died that sin-
ners might live. Death is hereby
disarmed of his terrors and the
grave of its gloom. They draw
nigh, it is true, towards the great
conflict; but thro' delightful views
of things heavenly, the grace and
glory of the Redeemer, they smile
at the pale enemy, often invite his
approach, and sing as they go,
"O death, where is thy sting!
O grave, where is thy victory!"
Their faith, their patience and
their triumph give a fresh attesta-
tion to the truth and divinity of
the gospel; they enlarge the cloud
of witnesses, set to their seal that
God is true, and like our deceased
friend, in one of her joyful but
dying moments, feel that "*a whole
eternity will not be too long, to bless,
praise and glorify God and the
Lamb.*"

Extracts from the Journal of Doctor BACKUS.

TUESDAY Morning, August 10, 1802. Twenty-eight years ago this day I was ordained to the work of the Gospel Ministry. I have awfully failed with respect to the discharge of my duty; but I desire to bless God that he inclined my heart to this work, and that he hath given me so much assistance and success in it. There are many trials attending the ministry; but these do not furnish any real discouragement, either against entering into it, or continuing in it. There are many glorious promises to all the godly, and especially to godly ministers, such as—"Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. My grace is sufficient for thee. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

For the first three years after I left college. I was much exercised in mind with respect to my spiritual state, and with respect to entering on the ministry. I had an advantageous offer, within that term, of going into mercantile business, and was advised by a few gentlemen of my acquaintance to go to the bar. I rejoice that I did not listen to either of those proposals. One evening, after conferring with a Christian friend relative to my heart, as I was walking to my lodging, I had a pleasing and lively sense of the words of the Apostle, in Rom. viii. 35. to the end of the chapter, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ," &c. From that time forward I determined, by divine permission, to study divinity and to preach. Within a few months after, viz. January 1773. I laid aside my school in Norwich

town, and went to the house of the Rev. Mr. Hart of Preston, to pursue theological studies; and began to preach the June following. More than three years elapsed from the first time that I hoped I saw the light of divine truth as the saints behold it, before I began to preach. The first dawn of the glory of the Saviour on my soul, was on May 8, 1770, from the words of Christ in John xiv. 6. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

My first remarkable awakening commenced in the autumn of 1768, just as I had entered on my last year in college. This was occasioned by dangerous sickness. I strove to shake off conviction on my recovery, and especially after my return to college (in February). I once walked into a lonely field in New-Haven—and after reflecting on my painful exercises of mind, I determined to throw off all concern for my soul, and indulge in the pleasures, honors and riches of the world. I had an opportunity on my return to my chamber to mingle with vain persons; but was soon after filled with remorse. Often did I think myself the most unhappy person on the earth; as I had no hope towards God, and as I could not enjoy the world with the same quiet with which many around me seemed to enjoy it.—After leaving college in 1769, I entered on the business of teaching a school in the place of my nativity, where I continued six months. My trouble of mind continued. I was now perplexed with deistical thoughts. I disliked the Bible because it contains doctrines which my proud heart could not relish; but doctrines which I have since preached. I read Leland's View of Deistical Writers: and was rationally con-

vinced of the truth and inspiration of the Scriptures. I could get no peace of mind by any of my doings. My mind was full of cavils against the doctrine of the atonement and of the divine sovereignty in particular. I had such heart-rifings against God as I durst not utter: my proud heart rose against a plan which requires entire self renunciation, and unreserved submission to the divine will. I set apart seasons for meditation and prayer, and flattered myself that I should find relief by such exertions. But I was always disappointed in my own schemes—and often at such times indulged awful murmurs against the methods of gospel grace. Sometimes I thought that I should with ease find the way to heaven, if I could live in a time and place of general religious attention; and sought to excuse myself from further anxiety, because I was alone, or had not the society of any considerable number who were apparently seeking to obtain eternal life.—In this general state I went on, thinking that I was peculiarly unhappy and that my case was singular, until the above mentioned May 8. In the course of that day my past doings appeared to be nothing, and I was convinced that I had not taken one step towards a reconciliation with God. In the evening, while walking in a room where were several persons discoursing on the common affairs of life, I felt myself unusually inclined to pray to God. I retired to bed, that I might not be disturbed. I sought unto the Lord for light and pardon. I begged that the gospel plan might no longer be a stumbling block. I now seemed to have dropped all my former objections against it. I seemed to be willing to be in

the hand of the Lord. The above mentioned passage in John xiv. 6. came into my mind, with a power which had been to me wholly unknown. The way of salvation by Jesus Christ appeared to be as clear as the meridian sun. I wondered that I had not seen it before—that the Jews in Christ's time were so blind to it—and that the world were so blind to it now. I spent most of the night without sleep. The next morning there seemed to be a new world around me. The glory of God was visible in every thing I beheld. This frame of mind continued through the day.—In June following I went to reside in Durham in Connecticut, where I spent some months in a school. I returned back to my native place in Nov. 1770. While in that town I strangely lost a sense of divine things, and was ensnared by the vanities of the world. While teaching a school a second time in Norwich (now Franklin) my mind was again awakened. I saw and I hope lamented my backslidings. One night, while hard pressed with the temptations of Satan, God appeared for my soul; the tempter fled, and my tongue broke out in praise.

In June, 1771, I went into Norwich town, and began to teach the school which I taught until I began the study of divinity. As I never had much taste for promiscuous company, or noisy amusements, I found little difficulty in living in as retired a manner as I wished. I was there favored with more serious company than usual; but was in some danger of being tinctured with Antinomianism, until I was, I believe, effectually cured by reading Mr. Edwards on Religious Affections, soon after I began to reside at

Preston. While in this place I had a favorite grove for retirement, at a small distance from my quarters : In that I spent many hours—in meditation, self-examination and prayer. God, sometimes, as I trust, appeared for me, when in the forest, when in my chamber and when in the sanctuary. I made it a daily petition to God that he would teach me by his word and spirit ; and would open to me my duty with respect to making a public profession of religion, and entering on the work of the Christian ministry.

I did not unite with the church until the first Sabbath in March 1773 ; when I was received into the communion of the church under the pastoral care of Dr. Hart. In Preston I tasted the sweets and felt the benefits of Christian society, beyond what I had done in any former period of my life. If I am not deceived, I enjoyed precious seasons of communion with God while a student in divinity. When I commenced a preacher, I entered on a course in which I have travelled, with painful yet pleasing, sorrowful yet joyful, depressed and yet encouraging feelings. I durst not lay much stress on pulpit religion ; and yet I have sometimes had such enlargements, particularly in public prayer, as abundantly to convince me that God's gracious presence forms our only happiness and support.

In settling in Somers, where I spent the second Sabbath after I commenced a preacher, I felt that I had a heavy cross to take up ; considering the state of the people, and my own inability. I set apart a day for fasting and prayer, a short time before I gave my answer to the request of the people to settle with them. I felt satisfied with the path of my duty relative to the

place of my settlement then ; and am convinced to this day that I did right in concluding to fix in this part of the vineyard. While a candidate I could enjoy no peace, only when I felt that I was not my own, and that I ought cheerfully to submit to the disposal of the great Head of the Church.

The day of my ordination was to me a solemn day. I hope that amidst all my wickedness, I have not forgotten the weight of my charge. Since I have been in the ministry, I have had, at seasons, clearer views of my own corruptions, and of my absolute dependence on sovereign grace, than at any former period of my life. I hope that now I know in whom I have believed.

As I have looked round on my fellow Christians, I have ever accounted myself as among the chief of sinners, and have found it much easier to maintain a charitable hope for them than for myself.

For a number of years after I hoped myself to be renewed in the spirit of my mind, I kept a diary, and had by me a written form of covenanting with God. I have long since laid them both aside, except what has been written in the form of a diary since my present illness. Perhaps I have not been wise in this omission. Particular Christians are however best able to judge what is most expedient in their own case. But I have kept up the practice of renewing covenant with God before attending the Lord's supper, and at some other times.

To thee, O my God and Saviour, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, do I now give up myself ; to be wholly thine in time, in death, and forever. I rejoice in thee as my God and portion ; and Oh ! accomplish thy wise and holy pur-

poses in thine own way, and when and how thou pleasest. Oh, gather me at last with thy saints, and thine shall be all the glory and the praise, world without end, AMEN.

Religious Intelligence.

Extract of a letter from a respectable character in Auslinburgh, New-Connecticut, to one of the Editors, dated 29th Nov. 1803.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE to communicate to you the pleasing intelligence, that God is verily among us, in this wilderness, calling home sinners to himself. As I wrote you before, there has been some appearance of uncommon seriousness this last summer in my family, and, as I now find, in some others. After my journey to Smithfield, and seeing how God manifested himself on sacramental occasions, I tho't it my duty to have those of my family that could attend the next sacrament, which was to be at a place through the wilderness about 60 miles. Accordingly three of my children, with 8 or 10 others, attended, and were much impressed there. They returned on Thursday about noon, and were desirous that there might be a meeting that evening. And notwithstanding the shortness of the notice, God so stirred up the hearts of the people, that more than 60 attended. The night was spent in prayer. None went from the place.—A solemn night! A number were deeply impressed in their minds—Some lost their bodily strength. The next Sabbath Mr. Badger preached with us. The people were all very sol-

emn. As the assembly was dismissed and began to go out, behold three young men, each about 16 years of age, were fallen down together near the door. Some of them had been remarkably careless. They were in such agony of mind, that every beholder was struck with astonishment. Mr. Badger immediately went to prayer, and prayed in a manner peculiarly adapted to the occasion. Few could refrain from weeping. A number of young men who had begun to boast of infidel principles, were struck at that time, and one person fell. Three little girls, walking from the place of meeting with locked arms, fell on the ground, and lost their bodily strength—one of whom did not recover till after midnight, which night was spent in prayer. At times to the number of eight, I recollect, lost their bodily strength. But little was heard from them except deep sighs. Since that time, God appears to have been calling home some poor sinners, and among the number we hope some of our family have been included.

At a meeting of our youth last evening, I am informed that thirteen were impressed in this extraordinary manner, which is more than has ever happened at one time. These marks of power are not limited to awakened sinners. Many Christians where the work has prevailed, have also been thus affected under a sense of divine truth."

ORDINATION.

On Wednesday the 15th inst. the Rev. *Shubael Bartlett* was ordained to the pastoral care of the second Church and Society in East Windsor. The Rev. *An-*

drew Yates made the introductory prayer; the Rev. *Zebulon Ely* preached the Sermon from Acts xx. 24; the Rev. *Nehemiah Prudden* made the consecrating prayer; the Rev. *David McClure*, D. D. gave the Charge; the Rev. *Henry A. Rowland* gave the Right Hand of Fellowship; and the Rev. *Richard S. Storrs* made the concluding prayer.

POETRY.

COMMUNICATED AS ORIGINAL.

A fight of Death.

1. **H**OW terrible must be the pang
Of the last parting breath?
While nature, struggling, fainting, yields
To cold, resistless death?
2. Th' immortal spirit, disengag'd
With a long piercing groan,
At once its habitation leaves,
And flies to worlds unknown.
3. And am I mortal? Must I meet
This dreadful conflict too?

Must I, perhaps this day, this hour,
Bid all below adieu?

4. Must soon my flesh, thus loathsome,
sink,

To greedy worms a prey?
And up to heav'n's tremendous bar
My spirit wing her way?

5. Trembling I seek some guardian arm
Cloth'd with unbounded pow'r:
Jesus, thou only canst sustain
The soul in such an hour.

6. This king of terrors thou hast foil'd,
While bow'd beneath his stroke;
Thy bleeding hand pluck'd out his sting,
His boasted armor broke.

7. From the dark prison of the grave,
Behold the Conq'ror rise!
Hark how the heavenly hosts proclaim
His triumph through the skies!

8. For rebels he endur'd the cross,
Unmeasurable love!
And for his meanest child prepares
Eternal joys above.

9. Then why, dear Jesus, should I shrink,
If thou indeed art mine?
Cheerful I'd leave this low abode,
And soar away to thine.

ASPASIO.

Donations to the Missionary Society of Connecticut.

		D.	C.
February 7.	A Lady	4	0
15.	A Lady in Vermont	2	0
22.	Deacon Aaron Moses of Symsbury	5	0
29.	Joseph Hull of Norfolk	0	75

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From a Friend of Missions, 900 Sermons on the Prodigal Son.